

Governor Jennifer M. Granholm
2007 Inaugural Address
January 1, 2007

The Next Michigan: Transformation and Opportunity

Lieutenant Governor Cherry, Senator Levin, Senator Stabenow, Governor Blanchard, Secretary of State Land, Attorney General Cox, Justices of the Supreme Court, Speaker of the House Andy Dillon, Senate Majority Leader Mike Bishop, Mayor Kilpatrick, Mayor Heartwell.

My great family.

My fellow citizens of the great state of Michigan.

You have returned me to this podium for a second and final time, and I am very clear about the mission *you* have laid upon my shoulders and upon my heart. I intend to do everything in my power to transform this state and to provide opportunity to *all* who live here.

But I cannot do it alone; I need the full participation of all those on this platform, but even more powerfully, you, our citizens, as well.

The times require honesty, and they demand leaders who will speak candidly about our situation and boldly lead us through it to a better future. . . to the Next Michigan.

Those who came before us met the challenges of their day to build Michigan anew.

They:

- forged a new state in a growing nation;
- carved great cities from forest and field;
- built prosperous manufacturing industries and formed great unions to share that prosperity;
- created, in the wake of war, an unprecedented middle class.

Michigan, we have thrived, and – with the same toughness and grit that marked our parents and grandparents – we will thrive again.

To those who say that no state faces the challenge at our doorstep, I say no state has the opportunity of the moment like ours. We *will* rise to meet the challenge, because it's who we are, and it's who we will be.

Today, we do face a unique and massive challenge – the transformation of an entire state.

We must transform a state whose proud economy has been built, piston by piston, for over 100 years upon a manufacturing platform that is now being eroded by global forces beyond our control.

We have seen, and we have fought alongside entire communities that have been hollowed out by the ravaging pull of cheap labor from distant lands. Who among us has not watched friends or neighbors worry and wonder, how will I get the new skills I need to get a job? How will I afford to care for an aging parent and send a child to college? How will I replace the health care

benefits that disappeared with the job I held for twenty years? Will my children have a chance to build a better life than mine?

These are the questions that we must answer.

We all know that our challenges have been decades in the making. And we know that full transformation doesn't happen overnight. But that is precisely why we will act with urgency and intelligence and with a boldness equal to the challenge that we face. Because it will *take* time, we cannot *waste* time.

I feel the urgency. You feel it too. We must act and act now.

But the need to *move now* is coupled with a deep belief that we will emerge from this stronger than we were before.

This we do know: We have lots to work with. No other state can match our Great Lakes, our universities, our forests and agriculture and open spaces, our people's work ethic, an incredible quality of life, our philanthropy and volunteerism, and our reservoir of human talent for research, development, and innovation. We're Michigan – we're matchless!

We must apply ourselves fearlessly to this foundation to build the Next Michigan.

I believe in the Next Michigan – I lay claim to it. Claim it with me. *Believe* in the Next Michigan, a place that we sense but do not yet fully know.

BELIEVE in the Next Michigan where opportunity to grow and to live a good life exists for *all* our citizens – the rich and the poor, the young and the old.

BELIEVE in the Next Michigan where every child can go to college and every parent is a partner in expecting that child to learn; where our knowledge and innovation and imagination are celebrated and produced and sold right here.

BELIEVE; come with me to the Next Michigan, where every displaced worker has the opportunity to open their own business or be retrained to a new future – a state where “no worker is left behind.”

Follow me.

BELIEVE in the Next Michigan where our cities are electric – alive with people and culture and energy and jobs.

BELIEVE in the Next Michigan where every citizen has access to affordable health care.

BELIEVE in the Next Michigan where our love of our land and our water will produce clean and green technology, alternative energy – the state that combines university brilliance with agricultural bounty to break our nation's dependence on foreign oil.

BELIEVE in a compassionate Michigan where our citizens have a responsibility to one another. That we are put here in God's country to serve not just ourselves, but we are here to serve each other. That we are a better state and a better people when we act as family to one another.

You know the Michigan that *is*. Believe in the Michigan that *will be*.

I assure you, from a great 20th century state will rise an even greater 21st century state. It will not look the same. It will demand different skills, knowledge, investment. It will demand more, much more from those on this platform, and from you, the citizens who hired us. We will rise to that challenge. We will reshape and enlarge our great state. I am ready and eager to lead you into the Next Michigan.

But I cannot do it alone.

The leaders up here are good. But, honestly, we're not that good. We must transform our state together. Ten million citizens, twenty million hands, each building and shaping the Next Michigan.

Our most pressing purpose will be to grow a diverse economy and jobs for our people; and to invest in our people so that they will have the skills to succeed.

It will require great action from me to continue working my economic plan to recruit businesses here, but it will require action from you, as well, to TELL our transformation story and BE our transformation story.

It will require great action from the legislative and executive branches of government to shape an investment strategy that draws jobs and people here, but it will require action from citizens, as well, in supporting those who will be courageous enough to cast a vote for change.

It will require great action from us to make retraining and entrepreneurship opportunities fully available to displaced workers. But it will require action from those workers, as well, to take advantage of the opportunities.

It will require action from policy makers to invest in the safety net for children and seniors, people with disabilities and those most vulnerable, and it will require the continuing nobility and goodness from citizens in recognizing that we are *all* affected by the circumstances – good or bad – of any one of our fellow citizens. For as Dr. Martin Luther King said, we are all woven in a mutual garment of destiny.

Friends, our elections decide winners and losers, but if we listen, they tell us much more than that.

In this election, the people of our state said loudly and clearly they'd rather run the risks of a race to the top than accept the certain defeat that comes with a race to the bottom.

The voters said they wanted a state that invests in our people and provides opportunity for all.

Given our ongoing fiscal crisis, none of this will be easy. We will need to change the way we do business both inside and outside government. But do any of us doubt that we face a moment of immense historical importance in Michigan today?

We ask so much of Michigan; here is what Michigan asks of us: To take our place in that unbroken line of generations that did not shrink from the test of their times. To fight for the way of life their hard work has won. Can any of us say “no” when Michigan calls?

I speak to you today, confident that in the weeks and months ahead, we will answer the call, not in words, but in deeds.

In this, our moment, with urgency and with courage, we will transform our beloved state, we will provide opportunity for all of our citizens, and together, we will build the Next Michigan.

Thank you.